

STORIES OF THE RHINE COUNTRY

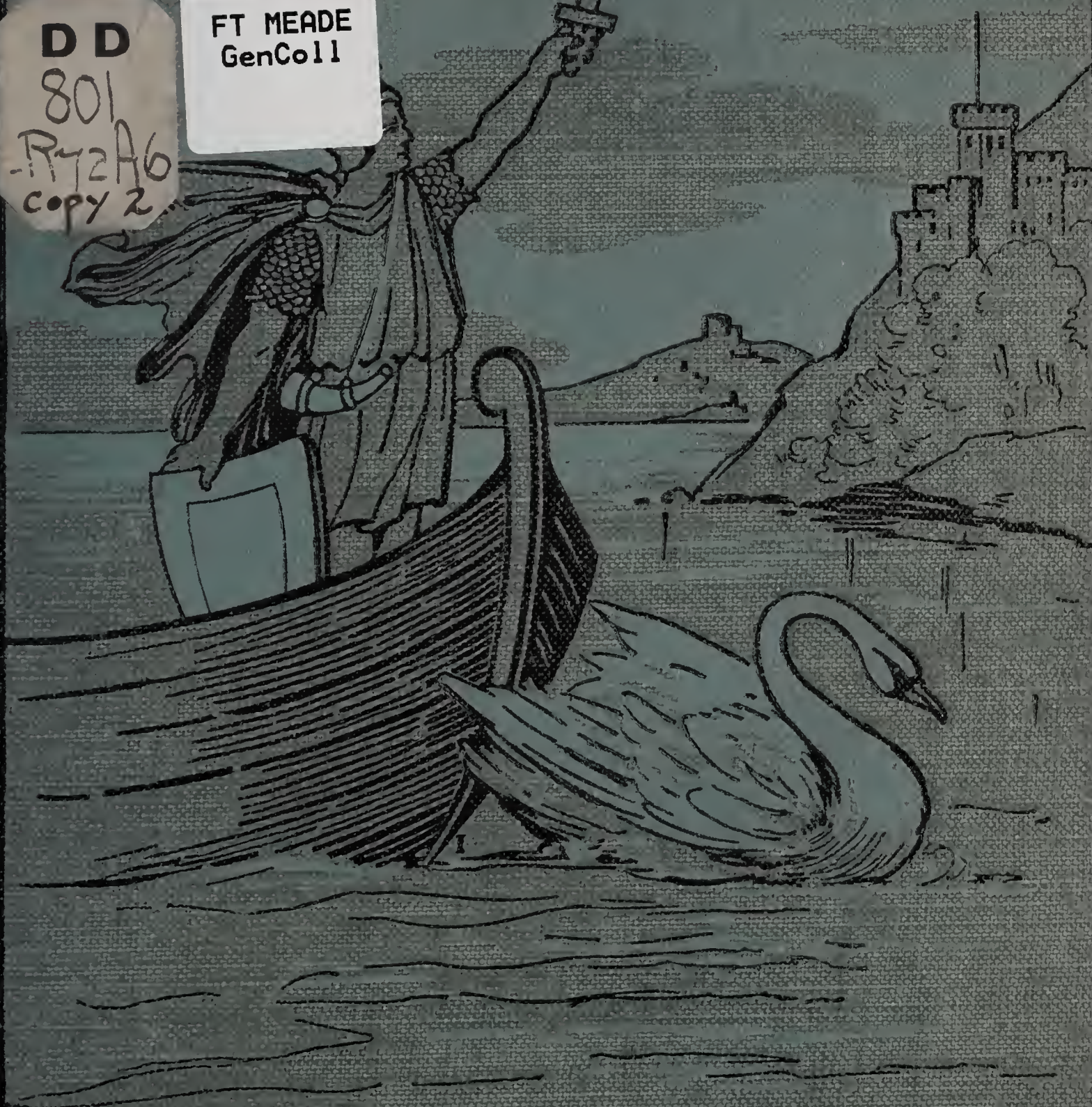
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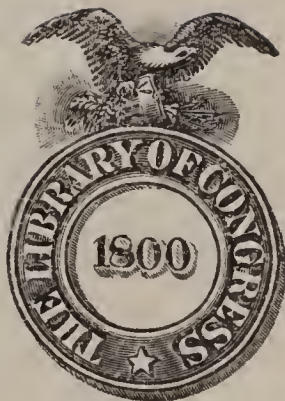
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STORIES OF THE RHINE COUNTRY

BY
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“ THERE, LIKE A LILY FROM THE RIVER, SAT THE BEAUTIFUL WATER-
NYMPH, LORELEI ”

STORIES OF THE RHINE COUNTRY

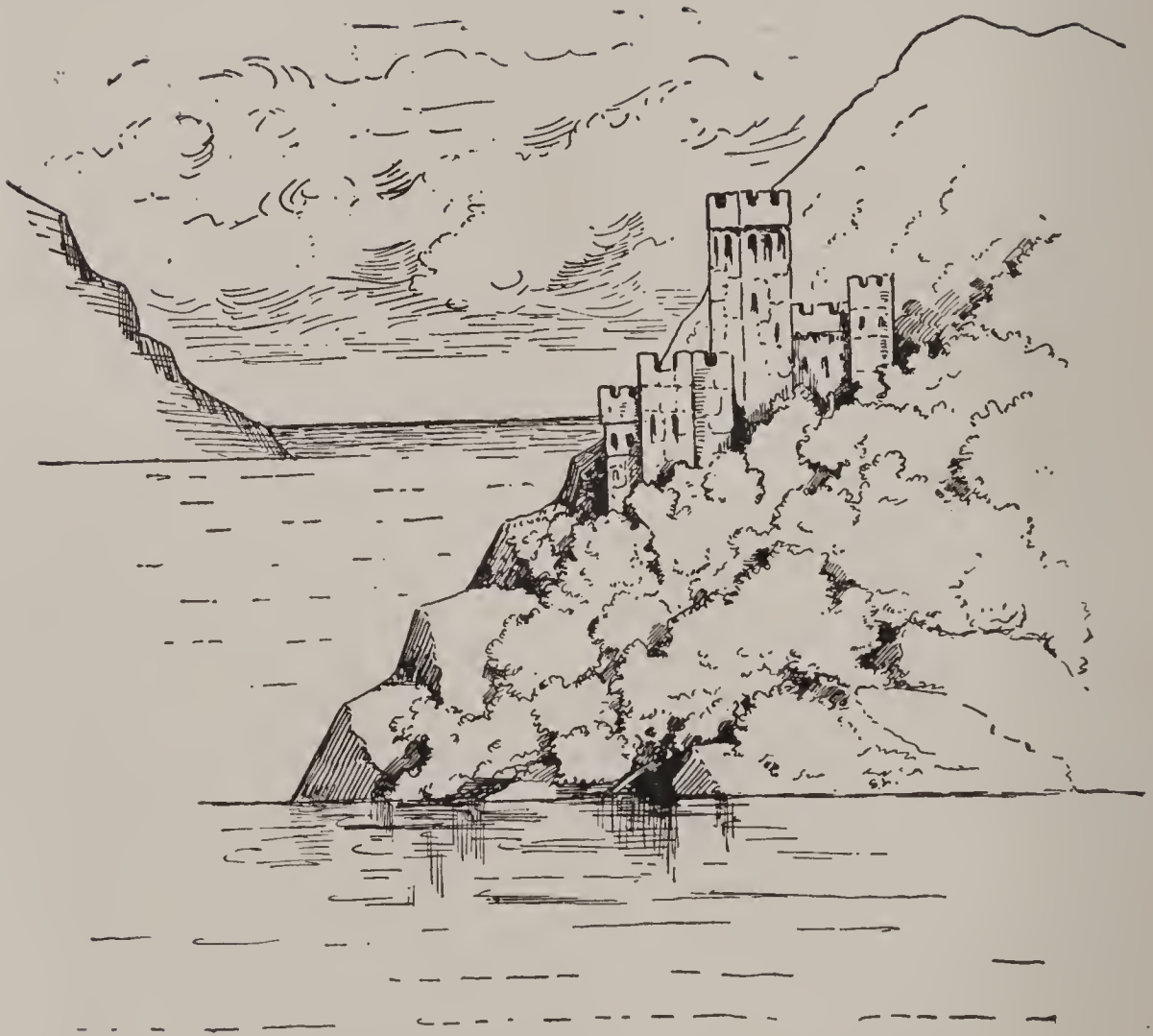
THE LORELEI

The Rhine, the Rhine, the beautiful River Rhine!

Do you know where it is? A tiny stream, it starts from the dark, wood-clad mountains of Switzerland — a little country across the sea.

Slowly it finds its way out of the great forest. It flashes into silver when it sees the great sun. It leaps away down the mountains. It hurries through the quiet valleys, babbling and bubbling to itself.

When it reaches Germany, this little brook of the mountains has grown to be a magnificent river. Smooth and sunny, it ripples past busy towns and villages. Pretty little homes dot its



“OTHER CASTLES CLING TO THE SIDES OF THE STEEP, ROCKY SLOPES”

banks. Happy children play beside it. Grape vineyards lie along the slopes, and their ripening fruit fills the air with fragrance.

Sometimes the Rhine grows deep, and dark, and narrow. It plunges headlong over high precipices. Full of queer curves and mysterious windings, it creeps along between wild, steep mountains, covered with thick, gloomy forests.

Up and down its waters go great steamers. They are filled with people of all nations, who have come to see the famous Rhine country. Do you know why it is so much talked about? Not only because of its beauty, but because so many wonderful stories are told about it.

Somewhere, in this lovely Rhine land, lives one of our "Seven Little Sisters" — Louise, the Child of the Rhine. Do you remember, in that beautiful story, we read of the "solemn old castles"?

They are all along the dark mountains on each side of the Rhine. Some are so far up on the

peaks that they seem like real “castles in the air.” Others cling to the sides of the steep, rocky slopes. Surrounded by forests, they look as if they grew there.

Long, long ago, they echoed to the sound of children’s footsteps. High-born ladies swept their silken trains up and down the ancient halls. Often was heard the clank of spurred boots, and the sharp clash of arms, when brave knights went forth to war.

They are empty now and deserted, these grim old castles. Vines creep over the crumbling walls. Mice scurry through the dim rooms, and bats flit about tower and turret. And the great Rhine, as it winds along, buries their secrets under its hurrying waters.

It is about these same “solemn old castles” of Rhineland, with their caves and rocks and forests, that I am going to tell you stories — stories so old and strange and full of mystery that no one knows where they came from. So they are called traditions or legends.

About half way between Bingen and Coblenz, the bed of the Rhine grows suddenly narrow. The river is very deep and quiet. Great cliffs on either side shut out the glad sunlight. The spot is dim and full of mystery.

On the right bank rises a huge cliff, like a tall tower. This is the famous Lorelei rock. Listen! As you say the word "Lorelei," the lonely Echo, who always lives here, repeats it after you — "Lorelei! Lorelei!" — once, twice, seven times. Fainter and fainter, it dies away at last into the deep silence of the forest.

Long ago, it is said, below the great Lorelei rock in the river-bed, there stood a wonderful palace. It was built, from glittering base to flashing spire, of pure crystal.

In this beautiful palace lived a lovely water nymph. She was called Lorelei, and was the daughter of old Father Rhine.

During the day she was never seen; but at night when the great red moon rose over the mountains, all in her white, white garments

spangled with gems, Lorelei climbed the rock. There, with a comb set thick with costly jewels, she sat and combed her beautiful golden hair.

And yonder sits a maiden,
The fairest of the fair,
With gold in her garment glittering,
And she combs her golden hair.
With a golden comb she combs it,
And a wild song singeth she,
That meets the heart with a wondrous
And powerful melody.

— *Heine.*

Slowly, back and forth, through her long, loose hair, she drew the comb. And while she combed, she sang. Such a song! Wild and sweet, it floated down through the dark and filled the night with its entrancing music.

No words can tell its tenderness. Clear and low, it echoed from rock to rock. It mingled with all the night-sounds of the forest — the startled cry of a bird in its little nest, the wind in the leaves, the waves on the shore.

The water-nymphs, who lived in the Rhine, might come and enjoy, with safety, this wonderful music. But woe to the human being, be he prince or fisherman, who paused in his boat to listen to the siren's song. Lost in its magic sweetness, he forgot time, place, home, friends — everything. His boat, being no longer guided, was wrecked in the dangerous channel, and he perished in the dark, swift waters.

One after another of the brave mariners and fishermen met this untimely death. And still not one among them had a near view of the charming Lorelei.

At last, one bold, handsome fisherman resolved to see her or die in the attempt. So one night, in the full of the moon, he climbed the cruel cliff.

There, all in her white robes, like a lily from the river, sat the beautiful water-nymph. She smiled at him. She held out her slender hand in welcome. She was lovelier, even, than his dreams had told him — so lovely, that night

after night, the fisherman scaled the rock to sit for an hour by her side.

Lorelei sang to him. She told him secrets of the Rhine. She showed him where to cast his net. He obeyed her, and each day his net was full of fish.

But one dark night the brave young fisherman did not return from the rock. His mates searched for him. They dragged the river for his body — in vain. Never more was he seen in his boat on the Rhine. Never again did he climb the moonlit cliff.

But the river rippled on. And far above, under the stars, the Lorelei still sang her wonderful song. Perhaps she had carried the bold fisherman away to dwell forever with her in her coral caves under the quiet waters.

Now Count Ludwig, the only son of Prince Palatine, heard of the wondrous sweetness and beauty of the Lorelei. How he longed for a glimpse of the lovely creature! At last, one night, he left the castle unseen, and sailed away

down the quiet river. The stars twinkled from the dark sky, and peeped back at him from the dark stream.

Suddenly, far, far above him, there was the flash of white drapery. And then he saw Lorelei herself! Her golden hair fell about her like a veil woven of moonlight. She bent over the ledge, and beckoned him with bewitching sweetness. Her eyes shone like stars, and she sang — oh, how she sang!

The Count listened — was enraptured. In imagination, while she sang, he saw green caves paved with pink shells. He heard the soft, far-away murmur of still waters on lonely shores. All about him, above him, below him, rippled waves of golden moonlight — he seemed floating in light.

Then, a fierce, grating, grinding sound! His frail boat struck against a jagged rock. It was upset. The Count was drowned.

Prince Palatine was wild with grief at the death of his only son. He sent some of his

strongest warriors to scale the Lorelei rock. He told them to capture the strange maiden, who was the cause of so much sorrow.

The gallant captain stationed men all about the rock. Then, with his brave knights, he climbed to the summit. There sat the lovely Lorelei. She crooned a faint, sweet melody to herself as she combed her yellow hair.

Four armed men surrounded her. There seemed no way of escape unless she plunged headlong into the river. "Surrender!" cried the valiant knights.

Slowly Lorelei lifted her dreamy eyes. She waved her white hands. The grim old warriors stood motionless in their places. They could move neither hand nor foot. They could make no sound. They were spellbound.

Lorelei drew off her wonderful gems. One by one, sparkling, burning, flashing, she dropped them into the river. Then murmuring some strange spell she began to dance.

Her white robes shone, her long hair floated

in the moonlight. Drowsily, dreamily, round and round, she whirled to her own mystic song. The strong knights could not take their eyes from the slender, swaying figure. They listened while she sang of pink pearl chariots and prancing steeds.

Suddenly, a great bubbling and seething arose. The Rhine had heard the call of his beloved child. The river began to rise. It rose higher and higher, until the warriors felt the cold waters swirling about their feet.

Then a cream-crested wave swept toward them. In its green depths was a magnificent chariot, like a great, glistening sea-shell. It was drawn by white-maned horses. With a light bound, Lorelei sprang into the magic coach. She was borne swiftly over the side of the cliff into the water. Then the waters went down. The warriors could move again. They ran to the edge of the cliff. They peered over. Drops of water shone like gems on the rocks. But there was no sweet face. There was no beckon-

ing hand, no gleam of golden hair. The beautiful Lorelei was gone.

And never since, on rock or shore, has she been seen. Never more does she play with her hair in the light of the moon. But sometimes, even yet, just at midnight, when all the forest is still and solemn under the moon, it is said that belated travelers hear the low, murmuring music of the Lorelei's song.

Maybe, some day when you go sailing on the Rhine, you will see the great rock which still bears the name of the lovely Lorelei. But look as you will, you will not see the golden-haired siren. And the peasants will tell you that she is still angry at the conduct of the warriors, and that never more will she leave her glittering cave-palace under the Rhine.

THE RAT TOWER

In a little island in the midst of the Rhine stands a tall, old castle. Behind it rise the mountains. At its feet sweeps the river, dark, deep, and full of mysterious voices.

This is the famous Rat Tower. There is a legend about it which tells how it came by its strange name.

Nearly a thousand years ago, this castle belonged to the Bishop of Bingen, whose name was Hatto. Bishop Hatto was rich and prosperous. But he was hard-hearted and cruel.

This is the story of Bishop Hatto as it is told in rhyme by the poet, Robert Southey:

TRADITION OF BISHOP HATTO

The summer and winter had been so wet
That in winter the corn was growing yet.
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,
For he had a plentiful last year's store,
And all the neighborhood could tell
His granaries were furnished well.

At last Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To greet the poor without delay.
He bade them to his great barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced at such tidings good to hear,
The poor folk flocked from far and near,
The great barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, young and old.

Then when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door;
And while for mercy on Christ they call,
Set fire to the barn and burned them all.

"In faith, 'tis an excellent bonfire," quoth he,
"And the country is greatly obliged to me
For ridding it in these times forlorn
Of rats that only consume the corn."

So then to his palace returned he,
And he sat down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man,
But Bishop Hatto ne'er slept again.

In the morning as he entered the hall
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all o'er him came,
For the rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he looked there came a man from his farm,
And he had a countenance white with alarm;
"My lord, I opened your granaries this morn
And the rats had eaten all your corn."

Another came running presently,
And he was pale as pale could be.
"Fly, my lord bishop, fly," quoth he,
"Ten thousand rats are coming this way,
The Lord forgive you for yesterday."

"I'll go to my tower on the Rhine," replied he,
"'Tis the safest place in Germany;
The walls are high and the shores are steep,
And the stream is strong and the waters deep."

Bishop Hatto fearfully hastened away,
And he crossed the Rhine without delay,
And reached the tower and barred with care
All the windows, doors, and loopholes there.

He laid him down and closed his eyes,
But soon a scream made him arise;
He started and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.



“THEY HAVE SWAM O’ER THE RIVER SO DEEP”

He listened and looked. It was only the cat,
But the bishop he grew more fearful for that;
For she sat screaming, mad with fear
At the army of rats that was drawing near.

For they have swam o'er the river so deep,
And they have climbed the shore so steep,
And now by thousands up they crawl
To the holes and windows in the wall.

Down on his knees the bishop fell,
And faster and faster his beads did tell,
As louder and louder, drawing near,
The saw of their teeth without he could hear.

And in at the windows and in at the door,
And through the walls by thousands they pour,
And down through the ceiling and up through the floor
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the bishop's bones,
They gnawed the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgment on him.

So, tradition tells us, perished the wicked
Bishop of Bingen. Some of the legends say
that the rats which fell upon him were really

the souls of the poor people whom he had murdered.

This is how the castle came by its name. And to this day it is called the Rat Tower, or the Mouse Tower.

Do you remember Longfellow's poem, "The Children's Hour"? In this poem he speaks of the Mouse Tower. The poet sits alone in his study in the twilight. His three little girls are in the hall outside. They laugh and whisper as they plan to rush in all together and give their father a surprise. He hears them.

He thinks of his big easy chair as his castle. His children are trying to take possession of it. He keeps very quiet. Suddenly

Through three doors left unguarded,
they break in upon him. He says:

They climb up into my turret,
O'er the arms and back of my chair,
If I try to escape they surround me,
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse Tower on the Rhine.

Some day you may go to Bingen and see for yourself the famous Rat Tower, standing straight and slender and graceful on its little green island. You will hear the winds and the waves as they seem to whisper — whisper — these stories to each other.

When the great sun sets behind the mountains, the Rhine sometimes turns red as blood. Then a strange warm glow, like fire, falls across the lonely Rat Tower. This fierce, red glare, the peasants say, is sent as a warning against cruelty to God's poor and hungry children.

Slowly it dies away. Over the crumbling walls of the castle glide long gray shadows. Upward they creep — higher — higher — higher. They reach the dark tower. Through door and windows, through chink and crevice and keyhole they steal.



“THEY CLIMBED UPON THE GREAT TABLES. THEY THREADED THEIR NEEDLES AND SET TO WORK.”

THE HEINZELMANNCHEN

Long ago, when fairies were as thick as flowers, when wishes came to pass almost as soon as they were made, and when all manner of wonderful things happened day and night, there lived in the Rhine Country a race of tiny beings called the Heinzelmännchen.

During the day they could never be seen. Whether they lived in crevices of the rocks, or in the bed of the Rhine itself, no one can say. They might have hidden away in flower-cups or sea-shells, they were so airily, fairily made.

When the darkness came, when all was still save for the murmur of the river under the stars, the Heinzelmännchen visited the towns and villages of the Rhine Country.

Wonderful were the tasks these tiny beings performed. They gathered purple grapes and piled them in vats ready for wine-making.

They threshed the ripe grain and stored it with great care. Wherever they went, the Heinzelmannchen finished the work begun by mortals.

The city of Cologne was specially watched over and cared for by the Heinzelmannchen. Unseen they crept into the houses and shops. They found the baker's bread rising on the table. They kneaded it and baked it. They ground the miller's corn and put the flour into sacks. They spun the flax. And well the people of Cologne knew that should one of the tiny folk be discovered at his work, the whole race would leave the town never to return.

In Cologne, there lived a tailor. All day long he cut and fitted and sewed. Often at night he left unfinished garments on his table. And whenever he did so, in the morning he found a pile of finished garments, neatly made and pressed and folded. Well the good tailor knew whose tiny hands did his work, and he was content to let the Heinzelmannchen come and go unseen.

But the tailor's wife was an inquisitive body. She wanted to see the little people at their work. Could their bits of hands use the great shears and irons? Did they bring tiny tools with them? Or could they work without tools? The more she thought about the matter, the more anxious she became to see them. Surely, she could peep once, and they would never know.

But how could she wake? She was a sound sleeper. The little feet and hands of the Heinzelmannchen made no noise whatever. At last a plan came to her. She took some dried peas and scattered them all over the floor. Then she went to bed and was soon sound asleep.

Meanwhile all grew dark and still along the banks of the Rhine. Hard working mortals slept. Out from their hiding places came the Heinzelmannchen ready to do their deeds of kindness.

They tripped lightly through the silent streets of Cologne. Into this house and that they stole.

They baked dozens of crisp brown loaves for the busy baker. They swept and dusted all the rooms of a tired housewife. And at last they came to the house of the tailor.

In they went. They climbed upon the great table. They threaded their needles and set to work upon the pile of unfinished garments. An iron was needed to press a seam. Several of the Heinzelmännchen sprang to their feet to get it.

Snap, snap, snap, went the dried peas. The little folk tripped and fell. There was a crash of heavy shears on the bare floor — a clatter of tongs — the heavy fall of a flatiron. Peas snapped and cracked on all sides.

The tailor's wife awoke. She rushed to the door. At last she had a glimpse of the frightened Heinzelmännchen.

Their bright eyes soon spied her. They knew at once that it was she who had scattered peas on the floor to trap them. They were so angry that they left the house and the town.

Nevermore have the Heinzelmännchen been seen in the town of Cologne. Tailors, bakers, millers, and all the working people must do their tasks alone; and all because, so the peasants say, of that ill-fated night long ago, when the kind-hearted little folk were so unkindly treated.



“HE WATCHED THE NURSE CARE FOR THE BABY”

THE MONKEY AS NURSE

The beautiful castle of Dhaun is now only a mass of ruins. But once, long ago, there was a strange carving over the gateway. It was a picture of a monkey amusing a baby with an apple.

This is the story of the clever monkey which is still told in the Rhine Country.

In the castle of Dhaun there was great sorrow. The wife of the noble Rheingraf was dead. Only a tiny babe was left to comfort the sad father.

The brightest room in the house became the nursery. A faithful old woman was chosen to care for the tiny boy. Everything possible was done to make him well and strong, for he was heir to an immense fortune and an honored name.

Day by day, the motherless child grew strong

and rosy and happy. He was like a sunbeam in the gray old castle, and he was the joy and pride of his stern father's heart.

In the castle, there was someone else who loved the baby. This was a large monkey. He was allowed to go wherever he liked about the house. Often he went into the nursery. He sat gravely by and watched the nurse care for the baby.

He liked to see the baby stretch out his fat dimpled hands for a bright ball which the nurse held toward him. Best of all, he liked to watch the nurse while she rocked the baby and crooned to him old songs of the Rhine.

One day, as usual, the nurse put the child to sleep. She laid him in his tiny bed. Then she sat down near by and was, as usual, soon sound asleep.

Suddenly she awoke. She glanced toward the cradle. There was no golden head on the pillow — no little form under the blankets. She started up in horror and searched the

room. She remembered all the terrible tales she had ever heard of children who were stolen. Surely, she thought, children gypsies had come in and taken the child away.

How angry her master would be! She wrung her hands and wept. She dared not face him. So she ran from the castle and hid herself away in the thick woods.

As she crouched in the bushes suddenly she heard a strange sound. She crept to an open space. She peered cautiously through the leaves. There, not far away, sitting on the moss, was the monkey. In his arms was the baby himself, cooing and crowing at a red apple which the monkey held toward him.

But soon the little one grew frightened. The woods were dark. The monkey's face was strange. The child began to cry. The monkey caught him up. He rocked him back and forth. He petted him and soothed him just as the nurse had done. When the baby was quiet, the monkey laid him gently down on the soft

moss. He sat down near by and was soon asleep.

The nurse sprang from her hiding place.



“IN HIS ARMS WAS THE BABY”

She ran quietly across the moss. She caught the child to her breast. Then she hurried back to the castle.

At the castle all was confusion. The nurse and the child had been missed. Everyone was searching for them.

The nurse laid the child in his father's arms. With many tears she told the story. The father was so glad to hold the little one safe and sound, and so pleased by the monkey's cleverness, that he had the engraving, of which I told you, placed over the gate in memory of the event.

Ever since that time, there has been the figure of a monkey on the shield of the noble family of Rheingraf.



"HIS LITTLE HANDS HELD TOWARD THE BABE A GREAT RIPE APPLE"

THE CHRIST-CHILD AND THE BOY

Along the banks of the Rhine are many cathedrals as old and gray as the stories which are told of them. In Cologne stands the Church of St. Mary of the Capitol. Here is a statue of the Virgin Mary and the Christ-Child. The Child leans down from his Mother's arms as if about to take a gift which is held up toward him.

This is the legend in remembrance of which the statue is erected.

Long ago in Cologne there lived a poor widow and her little son, Hermann Joseph. Every day they came to the Church of St. Mary of the Capitol. Together they knelt at the foot of the statue of the Virgin and the Child. Here the good woman taught her little son to say his prayers. The beautiful face of the Virgin, bending above him, made a deep

impression on Hermann Joseph. With all a child's pure love he loved her and the Babe in her strong, tender arms. What could he do to show his love? Others brought rich gifts and left them at the feet of the Virgin. He was poor. He had nothing of his own to give.

One day, however, the Holy Mother, whose ear is quick to hear the prayer of a child, heard a soft voice call her name. "Mary," it pleaded, "Mary, Mother of Christ. Here is a gift for the Babe in thine arms. Let him, I pray thee, stoop down and take it from me."

The Mother looked down. There at her feet knelt Hermann Joseph. His eager little hands held toward the Babe a great ripe apple. His face shone with trust and love. Touched by his faith, Mary bent low. She held her little Son toward the kneeling boy. The Babe reached out his tiny hands. As He took the apple, He gave Hermann Joseph a smile of divine beauty and tenderness. Hermann Joseph ran home. His little heart beat high with joy.

Every day after that, Hermann Joseph brought some offering to the Christ-Child. One morning it was a slender field blossom. The next it was a bright pebble from the bank of the Rhine.

Again it was only a bunch of strawberries, scarlet and sweet. And always when the boy gave his gift, his heart bounded to think how some time he should be a priest and tell people about the Virgin and the Babe.

But one day Hermann Joseph came weeping to the place. With many sobs he poured out his sad story to Mary and the Babe. He was now ten years of age. His good mother could no longer afford to send him to school. He must leave the books he so loved and learn a trade. By and by he must go out into the world and take care of himself and his mother. He could never be a priest.

When he had told all, a voice spoke to him. It was low and sweet like the first notes of the great organ at twilight service. It was

the voice of Mary, the beautiful Mother of Christ.

“Hermann Joseph,” it said. The boy listened. He lifted his blue tearful eyes to the adored face above him.

“Hermann Joseph,” said the gentle voice, “your faith is great. Your prayers shall be answered. Behind the altar, beneath the stones, is money. Take it. Use it well. Become a priest of God.”

Dazed with joy, Hermann Joseph left the church. He went to school. He entered a monastery. Years went by. He grew grave and wise. He studied deep books. He thought deep thoughts. He forgot the old church of his childhood. He forgot even the beautiful Mother and Child.

Then a strange thing happened. One day, Hermann Joseph found that of all the wise and wonderful things he had learned in the monastery, not one could he remember. He tried to read. The page might as well have been blank.

It told of things he once knew which had for him now no meaning. He had lost his memory. In despair he closed the great book.

As he sat there with his head bowed, there came to him a faint, far-off remembrance of days long past. As in a dream, he saw a dim old church. In one shadowy corner stood a statue of Mary and the Babe. At her feet knelt a tiny boy. Had he been that boy? Had he once knelt at the feet of the Virgin? And had he since forgotten her and the Babe in her arms?

Hermann Joseph's heart ached with shame and sorrow. He sprang to his feet. He returned to Cologne. He went to the old church. There in the silence he fell on the floor at the feet of Mary. He wept hot tears. He begged forgiveness for his long neglect. All day he stayed there. At last, worn out, he fell asleep.

A dream came to him. Once more, the Virgin spoke to him. She told him that his sins were forgiven. She told him, too, that

some day he — Hermann Joseph — should enjoy the rare fruits and flowers of Paradise.

For once, long ago, he had given his best gifts to the Child in her arms.

Hermann Joseph awoke. He was at peace. And lo — like a flash his memory came back to him. He remembered all the wise and wonderful things he had learned. He arose and went back to the monastery. But never again, so long as he lived, did Hermann Joseph forget the Holy Mother and the Babe of Bethlehem.

THE STORY OF ST. CHRISTOPHER

On the banks of the Moselle River stands the castle of Cochem. Inside the castle is a wonderful picture. It is made entirely of bits of colored stone, put carefully together, and showing the great St. Christopher. This is the story.

There was once a giant named Offero. He was strong and powerful. So large was he that beside him a tall man seemed but a little child.

Offero made a vow. "I will use my great strength," he said, "only in the service of the mightiest king to be found." He set out to look for this king. From place to place he went. At last he came to a splendid kingdom, where ruled, he was told, the greatest and most powerful of all kings.

Offero offered himself to serve the king.

The king was very much pleased. Among all his courtiers there was none like Offero.

So for awhile all went well.

One day the king sat on his throne. He wore purple robes and flashing gems. All heads were bowed before him. Suddenly one of his courtiers spoke Satan's name. The court grew silent. The great king shuddered. Offero was surprised.

"Who is this Satan?" he asked.

"He is king of the lower regions," was the answer.

"Is he mightier, O King, than yourself?" said Offero gravely.

"Alas!" replied the king, "he is mightier than any."

"Then I leave you," said Offero, "for I have vowed to serve only the mightiest."

Offero went away. He soon found the realm of Satan. One day, as they walked together, Offero saw his mighty master tremble.

"Of what are you afraid?" he asked.

“Of that,” said Satan, in a low voice.

Offero looked where Satan pointed. There at the side of the road was a rude wooden cross.

“Of that?” repeated the giant in wonder; “a cross?”

“Upon such a cross Christ died,” said Satan. “He is more powerful than I. I am afraid.”

“I serve only the mightiest,” said Offero proudly; “hence I leave you and seek Christ the King.”

Long Offero searched before he could find any to tell him of Christ. At last he came up with a band of weary pilgrims. From them, Offero learned that Christ’s kingdom lay across a deep, wide river. No one could cross the stream until bidden to do so by the King Himself.

“I will go with you,” said Offero. “Perhaps He will send for me.”

By and by they came to the stream. It was dark and deep and swift and strong. There was no bridge. There was no boat.

Even as they gazed, across the dark waters, came a beautiful messenger in glistening white robes. To a tired old woman of the band, he spoke gently. "Come," he said, "the King has sent for you."

The woman went bravely to the edge of the river. She stooped down. The current was swift. The water was cold as ice. She shivered and drew back.

Offero heard her cry of distress. He strode to the water's edge. As if she had been a child he raised her in his strong arms. He carried her safely across the river and set her down upon the shore.

"Go," he said, "tell Christ the King that Offero waits to serve Him. Until He sends for me, I will use my strength in helping the weak and timid across this stream to His kingdom."

Then Offero went back. Day after day, he helped pilgrims across the river. That he might always be near when needed, he built a little hut close to the water's edge and lived there.

One night there arose a terrible storm. Above the swift rush of the water and the roar of the wind, Offero heard a piteous cry. He



“WITH HIS STAFF HE STEPPED DOWN INTO THE WATER”

took his stout staff and his lantern and went out into the storm and darkness. On the bank of the river he found a little frightened child

who said that he must cross the stream at once.

The great giant lifted the little one to his strong shoulder. With his staff he stepped down into the water.

Under the heaviest burdens the giant had never faltered. But now, under the light weight of the child, he stumbled. He nearly fell. At each step the child grew heavier. It was all Offero could do to carry him. Every bit of his great strength was taxed before he reached the opposite shore and set the child safely down.

He turned to look — lo! the child was gone. In his place stood the tall, kingly figure of a man. His face was one of rare beauty. His voice was sweet beyond any words.

“Offero,” He said, “thou hast brought Me safely across the dark river of death. Be not surprised at My great weight. For always with Me I carry the sins and sorrows of all the great world. It is not strange, then, that thou

shouldst stagger under the burden. But be of good cheer. Thou art no longer Offero — henceforth art thou St. Christopher, the bearer of Christ. For — *I am the Christ!*”

Thus, it is said, the giant Offero became the great and good St. Christopher.

THE GOLDEN SHOES

Where the waters of the Main River empty into the Rhine, stands the city of Mainz. In this city is one of the oldest and most famous cathedrals in the Rhine Country.

Strange sights has the old building seen. Brave knights in flashing armor have sought it as a shelter for themselves and their tired steeds. Again and again its walls have echoed to the march of armies and the din of battle. Six times it has been partly destroyed by fire. Rebuilt in places, repaired in others, it still stands — its old walls gray with memories.

Inside the cathedral is an image of the Virgin. This statue, the legends say, was once possessed of a strange power — the power of working miracles. Here is the story.

Up and down the streets of Mainz, long ago, there roamed an old musician. With him

went always his one friend — a faithful old fiddle. Time was when melodies gay as bird songs, sweet as winds at sunset, had rippled from its strings. But like the musician himself, the fiddle was now old and weary. Its bow was warped. Its strings were strained and broken. It could play only sad old tunes for which nobody cared.

Starving, sick at heart, the musician at last crept into the cathedral. Before the image of the Virgin he knelt. He said a prayer for help and comfort. Then alone in the gloom of the great church, he played to Mary the best of all his hymns — a little melody of other happier days.

The tender heart of the Virgin is always touched by real sorrow. She bent toward the old musician. With a quick motion she tossed from her foot one of her small golden shoes.

The old man could scarce believe his eyes. There before him lay the answer to his prayer — a slipper of real gold. He took it up. As

best he could he thanked the Virgin. Then he left the cathedral. He must have food or die. He went to a goldsmith's. He offered for sale the precious golden shoe.

Such a slipper — small, dainty, of pure gold — was unusual. The goldsmith examined it with care. He asked question after question. The old musician told his pitiful story. When he described the miracle in the cathedral the goldsmith's face grew keen and hard. The old man's story was false. Then and there the goldsmith arrested him for stealing a golden shoe from the statue of the Virgin.

The old man was tried. Again and again he told his story. He said that he was innocent. He pleaded to live. In vain. He was sentenced to be put to death. He was hurried through the streets to the chosen place.

Crowds followed him. They shouted aloud the story of the old man's crime. They hooted him and heaped shame upon him. Boys jeered and threw stones. In all the crowd the poor

musician had but one friend — his old violin. He pressed it close to his breast and went wearily on. At the door of the cathedral he paused. He begged to go in — to say one last prayer to the Blessed Virgin.

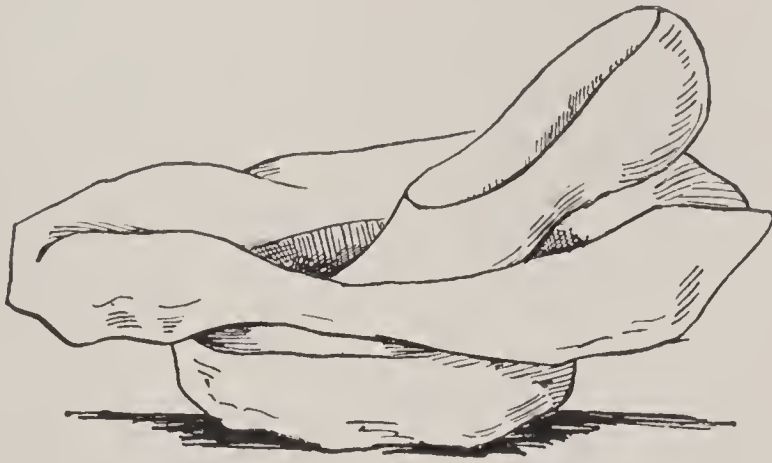
He was allowed to enter the cathedral. He knelt at the feet of Mary. The crowd surged about him. He lifted his face to the Virgin and prayed. “Mary, help of all in sorrow,” he whispered, “open for me — a poor old man — the Gates of Paradise.” Tears choked him. He raised the little old violin. Lovingly his tired fingers touched the strings.

“The last music I make on earth,” he said, “shall be in honor of thee, O most Blessed Virgin!”

Then across the stillness floated the strains of the little old hymn. The crowd listened. And there before them all, the Virgin bent her beautiful head. With kind, grave eyes, she looked upon the old musician. Lightly she lifted her jewelled robes. With a deft, dainty

motion, she tossed off her second shoe. Down it fell — straight into the old man's tattered hat.

The people clustered about the kneeling man. Their eyes were wide with wonder. They struggled and jostled each other as they peered



into the hat. There lay the golden shoe. The Virgin herself had proven the old man's innocence. There was a low murmur of voices. A priest came forward. "Here is a sum of money," he said to the musician. "It will keep you in food all the rest of your life. Take it, and give me the golden shoes."

The old man took the money and went away with his violin. The little golden shoes were locked up in the church. Had they been given back to the Virgin, the peasants say, she might still have performed with them many wonderful miracles.

THE CHANGE OF TIME

On a bend of the Rhine stands the beautiful city of Basel. In its old museum can still be seen a curious figure called the Lallenköing.

Long, long ago, the Lallenköing stood on the great tower of the gate guarding the city of Basel. By means of some clever mechanical arrangement inside, every few seconds the figure stuck out its tongue, as if mocking someone outside the gates.

The machinery has long since given out. The mocking tongue is silent. But the old legend is still told.

Once, long ago — so the story goes — some traitors in the city of Basel agreed to give the city into the hands of their enemies. They promised that on a certain night, when the clock in the tower on the gate struck the hour

of twelve, they would open the gates that the enemy might enter.

The appointed night came. The sounds of the city grew silent. One by one the lights went out. All was still and dark. The traitors hid themselves in the heavy shadows of the gates, and waited.

Now the warder of the gate was an old, old man. For years he had faithfully guarded the city. To-night, dim as his old eyes were, he saw the traitors skulking in the dark corner. He heard a whisper—"When the clock strikes twelve." "When the clock strikes twelve!" he said to himself. "There is a plot on hand for the downfall of the city."

What could he do? If he tried to escape and warn the authorities he would be seen by the traitors, caught, put to death—and Basel would not be saved. It was nearly midnight. In ten minutes the clock would strike. Suddenly a plan came to him. He glanced at the men hidden in the shadows. They were quiet.

He entered the tower. He crept cautiously up the stairs to the old clock. With hands that trembled, he made some slight changes in the works. The clock struck — the old man held his breath — *One!*

Down below, inside the gates, the traitors heard the long, solemn stroke. They waited, listening for the next. It never came. Surprised, frightened, they looked at each other. Had they fallen asleep? Had their plot been found out? They sprang to their feet. Stealthy as shadows, they glided away.

Outside the gates, the enemies of Basel watched and waited. They, too, heard the deep, low tone of the bell as it struck — *One!* It was not yet midnight. Was there some mistake? Was this a plot against them? Warily they waited. Then, in the first chill gray of dawn, they stole away.

In the morning, the mayor of Basel glanced at the clock. It was an hour fast. He went to the warder. The old man told him all —

the plot to give up Basel to its enemies, his plan which had saved the city. When the news was told, the town went wild with joy.

To mock their enemies, who had waited from midnight to dawn outside their gates, the people caused the figure, of which I told you, to be made and placed upon the tower.

The mayor called together the city council. They punished the traitors. They then heaped honors upon the warder, and decreed that forever after the old clock in the tower should remain an hour ahead of time, that the people might remember their narrow escape.

This is the reason why, to this day, the city of Basel is always an hour ahead of all the other Swiss cities.

THE INN-KEEPER'S WINE

To the inn of Hans Teuerlich, in the town of Hirzenach, there came, one day, a stranger. Tired and thirsty with long traveling, he strode into the inn. "Wine, wine," he called; "bring me wine — of the best."

Hans Teuerlich took up a huge earthen vessel, called a crock. With it in one hand and a candle in the other, he went down into his wine cellar. The flickering light fell faintly on casks and barrels, beams and rafters, all dark and dusty, all hung thick with cobwebs.

At one side of the cellar was a large cask. Before this, Hans Teuerlich set down the crock. Very slowly he turned the faucet. Down into the crock trickled a thin stream of sour Rhine wine. When the vessel was partly full, Hans Teuerlich carefully tightened the plug. He made sure that not one drop of wine could



"HE POURED OUT A GLASSFUL FOR HIMSELF"

escape. Then he carried the crock to another faucet near by. This was set into the wall of the cellar.

Hans Teuerlich turned the plug. There was a low, gurgling sound. It grew louder and louder. Then the water of the Rhine itself rushed in and filled the crock to the very brim.

Hans Teuerlich went back upstairs. He set down the crock. He made a great ado polishing his guest's tumbler. He poured into it some of the mixture of wine and water. With a wave of his hand and a low bow, he presented the glass to his eager guest.

"Drink, sir," he said; "the cellar of Hans Teuerlich furnishes the best wine in all the Rhine country."

The guest seized the glass. He lifted it to his lips. He threw back his head with the air of one who will drain his glass to the last drop. He took a deep draught. Then he made a wry face. He set down the glass. "Are you

quite sure," he said to his host, "that no water has been mixed with your wine?"

"Water?" exclaimed Hans Teuerlich indignantly. "Water in *my* wine? How dare you, sir?" And to show that the wine was pure, he poured out a glassful for himself.

And as he did so — splashing from crock to tumbler — out swam three small fishes. Round and round in the glass they sailed, quite as merrily as they had once done in their home in the waters of the Rhine.

The traveler saw the fishes — saw the round face of his host grow red with shame and dismay, and laughed. "Hans Teuerlich," he said, pointing to the telltale fishes, "when next you try to make Rhine water into Rhine wine, I would suggest that you use a strainer."

All this happened so long ago that no one knows just when it was. But thrifty Hans Teuerlich took the advice of his guest seriously. He told his children about it. They told their children.

His many descendants are still inn-keepers in the Rhine country, and, it is said, to this day, if you should visit one of their dark wine cellars, among dusky casks and barrels, you will find a large, tin strainer.

THE TWO BELLS

Two bells once hung in the city of Spires. One was iron — dark and massive. The other was pure silver. Neither of these bells, it is said, was ever rung by mortal hand. But whenever a sinner died in the city, of its own accord the great iron bell swung to and fro, to and fro, tolling its gloomy death knell. For this reason this bell was called the sinner's bell. The silver bell was silent save when a member of the emperor's family died. At such times it sent forth a soft, mournful chime. It was called the emperor's bell.

One day, suddenly across the bustle of the city, there floated the sound of the emperor's bell. Clear and sweet and pure, its tones mingled with the murmur of the Rhine and rose upward — upward — upward — until they seemed to reach the very gates of Paradise.

The people left their work. The emperor was perfectly well. But in a little old hovel, alone, unknown, a beggar died. Would the emperor's bell — the bell of precious silver — ring its royal death knell for the passing of the soul of an unknown beggar?

Wondering, the people returned to their work. That night at the emperor's palace all was quiet. Trusty sentinels watched the great gates. But past them, unseen, went a dark-robed stranger — the Angel of Death. He entered the palace. He found the emperor. "I come for thee," he said.

All his life long, the emperor had pleased none but himself. Never had he owned that any was greater than he. But at the sound of that voice he trembled and obeyed. In silence, alone, the emperor's soul went with the Angel out into the darkness.

Slowly, solemnly, across the night a bell began to toll. The people of Spires moved uneasily on their beds. They heard the sinners'

bell as it rang its mournful message. They wondered sleepily what very wicked person was dead. Then they fell asleep again.

Next morning the palace was closed. The windows were darkened. The emperor was dead.

“The emperor?” cried the people. They remembered the tolling of the iron bell. They looked at each other with awed, frightened faces.

“The bells know,” whispered one to another. “The death of a good man in poverty is more worthy of honor than the death of a wicked man in riches. In God’s sight to be truly *great* one must be truly *good*.”



“‘OH, WHAT PRETTY PLAYTHINGS!’ SHE CRIED”

A GIANTESS' PLAYTHINGS

One morning, long ago, it is said the daughter of the mighty giant of Nideck stood alone at the door of her father's castle.

It was still early. The skies were softly flushed with rose and violet. The wind came fresh from woods of fir and balsam. Far off the Rhine rippled and sparkled in the sunshine.

"I'm so tired of playing all alone," said the giantess to herself, "I'll just go out for a walk."

The giantess was still very young. But she was very large — so large that with one step she landed in a field near Halsach on the Rhine.

As she looked down from her great height, she saw something which made her look again and again. She bent down, shading her eyes.

It was only a peasant plowing the field. His plow was of the usual size. His horses were large and strong. He, himself, was a

full-grown man. But in all her life the giantess had never seen such tiny creatures which could do such wonderful things.

She screamed and clapped her hands in delight.

“Oh, what pretty playthings!” she cried. “I must have them for my own.”

The shadow of the giantess had fallen across the field. The clapping of her hands was like a strong wind. Her voice sounded like far-off thunder. The peasant, who was busily plowing the field, looked up to see if a storm was near. At sight of the giant maid, he stood wide-eyed and motionless. Before he had time even to think, she reached down. With one hand she picked him up.

She bundled him — plow, horses, and all — into her apron. She took a step or two, and was at her father’s castle.

Her father strode out to meet her. “Oh, father,” she cried, “see what I found over there in the field!” She opened her apron.

“The horses can go, father. And this tiny creature moves his arms and legs as we do. And he spoke to the horses. I heard him. Oh, father, may I keep him always to play with?”

The giant looked grave. “My daughter,” he said, “these are not toys. They are living creatures as well as we. There are many of them in the valley. They feel and think. They work. They lay out farms and build cities. They are called *men*. And some day, not far off, these men — small and weak as they seem beside us — will drive us away and live in our places upon the earth. Take back the man and his plow. Put them where you found them. And never again, so long as you live, lay a finger upon any one of them.”

The giantess stepped back to Halsach. She set the man, horses, and plow carefully back in the unfinished furrow. Then sadly, with tears in her eyes at the loss of her pretty toy, she went back home.



SIEGFRIED

BRUNHILDE — A SPRING LEGEND

Everyone has heard the fairy tale of the Sleeping Beauty, the Prince, and the magic kiss. Again and again it has been told and sung. Beautiful operas have been written about it. The most charming version of the old legend comes from Germany. Here it is.

On a lofty mountain near the Rhine — so high that its peak was far above the clouds — there once stood a wonderful palace. Its massive walls, its fluted pillars, its slender towers and turrets were all of snow-white marble. Its dome was of pure gold. So splendid was the palace against the sky that it seemed fashioned of millions of sunset clouds, rose tinted.

Above the entrance, with watchful eyes, hovered always a great white eagle. A wolf guarded the doorway. Inside, the palace was

dazzling. Everywhere shimmered and glimmered costly gems — crimson and blue, purple and green and gold. Doors and windows were always wide open. Sunshine flooded the rooms. Winds sweet with the breath of fadeless flowers swept through them.

In the gardens grew luxuriant shrubs and vines. All day long brooks leaped and laughed. Birds sang. Flowers bloomed. Gigantic trees cast cool green shadows. And here grew the wonderful golden apples of which, if one ate each day, one never grew old.

In this palace above the clouds, lived the great god, Odin. Here, too, dwelt the nine wonderful war maidens, each with her powerful winged horse.

One of these war maidens was Brunhilde. More beautiful was she than any of her sisters. Her strength was greater than her beauty — her tenderness was greater even than her strength. No wonder, then, that Odin loved Brunhilde as his own daughter.

Whenever war raged, the nine war maidens mounted their swift horses. They flew to the battlefields. Fearlessly they plunged into the thick of the fight. They caught up the bravest of the heroes and flew away with them — up, up, up, to the palace above the clouds.

One day Brunhilde was sent to a great battle: From head to foot she was clad in silver armor. On her head flashed a silver helmet with wings of beaten gold. In her hand was a shield of pure silver. When she flew by on her winged horse, it seemed like the passing of myriads of dazzling sunbeams.

In the din and smoke of battle, Brunhilde disobeyed Odin. She tried to save a knight other than the one the great god had commanded her to save.

Odin could not be disobeyed without sorrow as the result. Much as he loved Brunhilde, she must be punished.

“Because you dared to disobey me,” he said, sorrowfully, “you shall be no more a war

maiden. You shall leave at once and forever this beautiful home. You shall become a mortal. You shall live on the earth."

Poor Brunhilde! Banished from the home she loved, she wandered up and down the earth. She did not understand the people — their strange words and ways. They did not understand her. Often she lifted her tearful eyes to a far-off mountain. Sometimes, at sunset, she caught glimpses of snowy walls and glittering towers. That was home. But night came quickly. The vision faded. Her tears fell. Weary and heartsick, she came at last to the quiet land of Isenstein.

Here dwelt a king, a gentle, generous old man. His heart was touched by Brunhilde's sad face and wistful eyes. To him she seemed but a child. He took her to his own castle.

"You shall be the Princess Brunhilde," he said. "Henceforth you shall reign over all Isenstein."

In her new home, Brunhilde became happy

again. As a woman she was even more beautiful than as a war maiden. A lovely light filled her eyes. So sweet was she, so winning and winsome, that all the people loved her and called her "The Spring Maiden."

But Odin's ever watchful eyes were upon Brunhilde. She was too happy, too care-free. One day the great god dropped into the realm of Isenstein the fatal thorn of sleep.

The thorn stung Brunhilde. Music — such as she had heard in dreams — surged about her. It soothed her. It lulled her. Lower and lower drooped her beautiful head. Far off and faint she heard the voice of Odin.

"Sleep, Brunhilde," it said; "sleep, until there comes to awaken you the Prince who knows not fear. And if upon earth there be no such Prince, sleep on forever."

Brunhilde slept. The realm of Isenstein slept with her. And the castle and all its sleeping people Odin closed about in a circle of magic fire.

Year after year the trees of the forest grew and spread. Year after year, from trunk to trunk, from branch to branch, vines clambered and clung, twining and twisting and tangling themselves into an almost impassable wall. So, shut in from all the world, the castle slept.

Far away from the enchanted shores of Isenstein, lived a young prince. His name was Siegfried. In all the realm there was none so true, so pure, so brave as Siegfried. Everywhere reports spread of his deeds of daring, of his gentle chivalry, of his strong and tender heart. Strange were the stories told of his childhood. He lived then — it was said — in the depths of a forest. Fearlessly he roamed about its dark paths. He wore a suit of fur. Skin sandals were on his feet. Over his shoulder was slung a tiny silver horn. On this he blew wild, weird notes. And from far and near came birds and beasts to listen. Foxes, bears, and wolves gathered about him. The cubs nestled close to the slender golden-

haired boy. They looked at him with fearless, trusting eyes. And Siegfried looked back as fearlessly and trustingly. For he loved all the wild things of the wood.

Siegfried made for himself — it was said — a wonderful sword. It was straight and shining and supple. It was sure and sharp. With it he killed a terrible dragon.

Now that he was a man, Siegfried longed to see the world. With his magic sword, he set out. Soon he came to a great castle.

Here lived a mighty giant with terrible eyes and a long beard, white like sea foam. He sat upon a throne carved from the teeth of a sea horse.

“Hail, O Giant,” said Siegfried in his clear young voice.

Everyone loves bravery. Even the fierce old giant was pleased by Siegfried’s fearlessness. “Welcome, Siegfried,” he said. “Come, sit by me on my throne, whereon never mortal sat.”

Siegfried sat down beside the giant. He told him of the noble deeds he longed to do to make the world brighter and better.

The giant showed Siegfried a horse. It was white and shining like fresh fallen snow. "Take this horse," said he. "His name is Greyfell, which means Shining Hope. When his eyes seem to send forth sparks of fire and his mane glistens with strange light, success awaits you — go forward."

Mounted on Greyfell, Siegfried rode away. After a long, hard journey, he came at last to the enchanted land of Isenstein.

Drowsy waters lapped on the shore. Drowsy winds stirred the trees of the wood. Siegfried rode fearlessly into the dark, dim forest. With his trusty sword, he cut his way through the thick growth of vines and shrubs. Sometimes, through the trees, he caught glimpses of a castle. When he came out of the woods, it rose before him. Its walls were gray and moss grown. Its towers were crumbling into

dust. All about it the ground was bare and brown.

“On, good Greyfell!” said Siegfried. And they dashed boldly on. But suddenly they came to a halt — the horse drawn up on his haunches. For there, just before him, leaping, crackling, fanning their faces with its cruel heat, was the river of fire with which Odin had surrounded Brunhilde’s castle.

Greyfell’s eyes flashed. His mane sparkled. Siegfried remembered the words of the giant — “Success awaits you — go forward.”

“On, good Greyfell!” he said. Together they plunged into the fierce river of fire. Before the light of Greyfell’s eyes and the courage of Siegfried’s heart, the angry flames fell back. Safely, horse and rider reached the opposite bank.

On the castle walls lay sentinels. At the gates were watchmen. So sound asleep were they, they seemed carved of stone. In the great stables grooms slept beside their sleeping

horses. Knights slept in the saddle. On the roof slept doves. Even the fountain was still.

With one blow of his sword Siegfried broke down the rusty door of the castle. He entered. Cooks and maids stood at their tasks — asleep. In the banquet hall brave knights and ladies fair sat at table — asleep. Behind them stood servants — each with dish in hand — asleep. The little page slept on the floor. The king, in royal robes, slept on the throne.

At last Siegfried came to a fast closed door. His heart beat high with hope. He pushed the door gently. It yielded — fell back. The room might have been carved from a mammoth sea-shell, so exquisite was it in tints of pearl and pink. A scent as of faded flowers filled the air. The sound of soft, regular breathing came to him. He crossed the room.

There on a couch, piled high with silken draperies of soft rose, sea green, and sea blue, lay a maiden. Her eyes were closed. Her dark lashes trembled on cheeks pink as spring

flowers. Her lips smiled as if she dreamed sweet dreams. Over the silken pillow, down the coverlet to the floor, streamed the soft, shining masses of her hair.

It was Brunhilde. For a hundred years she had lain there asleep. Yet so sweet had been her dreams that she was not a day — not an hour older than when she had fallen asleep.

Siegfried knelt beside her. “O perfect form in perfect rest!” he said. She stirred not. Still she smiled. Gently, the prince kissed her smooth white brow.

It was the magic kiss. Brunhilde opened her glorious eyes.

A touch, a kiss. The charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks.
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze through all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

Up sprang the grass, green and thick. The flowers poured forth the fragrance so long shut in their hearts. Birds sang in ecstasy. The air was warm and soft. The skies were blue. Everywhere there was joy and song and love and spring. For the Prince had come. Brunhilde was awake.

LOHENGRIN

Cleves on the Rhine is famous for one of the most beautiful of all the Rhine stories. It has been told and re-told. It has been made the subject of one of Wagner's best-known operas. This legend is that of Lohengrin, the Swan Knight.

In Cleves there once lived the wealthy and powerful Duke of Brabant. At his death, his little daughter, Elsa, became the sole heiress of all her father's great wealth. Little Elsa was left to the care of one of her father's subjects — Frederick of Telramund. Frederick was vain and envious. He wanted for his own the vast wealth, the high position, the great name of Elsa, Duchess of Brabant. He asked her hand in marriage. Elsa would not listen to him. In anger he thrust her into a dark, damp prison. "Here remain," he said, "until you are willing to become my wife."

Elsa was true and brave. She tried to think of some way of escape. She sent messengers to the king. They told her sad story. The king listened. "The matter shall be settled by combat," he said. "Frederick of Telramund shall fight against any knight who will champion the cause of Elsa, Duchess of Brabant. If Frederick wins in the contest, she must be his wife. If her champion wins, she is free." In this way many matters of right and wrong were settled in those days.

The king's decision was brought to Elsa. With sinking heart, she sent her heralds up and down Cleves. "Who will champion the cause of Elsa, Duchess of Brabant, against Frederick of Telramund?" they cried. But in all Cleves there was no knight brave and skillful enough to fight the powerful Frederick of Telramund.

Poor Elsa! Day after day, in her lonely cell, she listened to the rush and roar of the great Rhine under her window. What could

she do? Suddenly there came to her the memory of a dream she had once had. She had fallen asleep out of doors in the wind and sunshine. While she slept, out from the forest had come a young knight. He was clad in blue and gold. To her he had given a tiny silver bell. "Take this," he had said, "and if ever you are in great trouble, ring it. Wherever I am, I will hear. Wherever you are, I will come to you."

Strange as this dream had been, the waking had been still stranger. For a beautiful bird of soft plumage had flown down to the girl. About its neck had hung a tiny silver bell. Elsa had untied the bell and fastened it to her waist. She gazed at it now through her tears.

It was so small — so fragile. But it was her last hope. Flinging herself on her knees, with her whole heart, Elsa prayed for help. Then lifting her eyes toward heaven, she rang the bell.



LOHENGRIN

Faint and silvery, its soft tones sounded through the cell. It was as if a garden lily had shaken her dew-wet petals. Through the window the pure chime floated. The wind took it — bore it, growing stronger and sweeter, to the Rhine. The river caught it — carried it, echoing and re-echoing, on and on, on and on, until it reached a dark, dim forest. Here it sounded with mighty strength — as if all the bells in all Christendom had joined in one great grand peal for help.

In this forest, hid from human eyes, stood the Temple of the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail was the cup into which, it was said, had fallen a few drops of the blood of Christ at the Crucifixion. So pure was the Holy Grail that angels had caught it up and hidden it in this sacred shrine deep in the forest. Here dwelt King Parsifal and the Knights of the Holy Grail. Once a year it was unveiled. And always while it was unveiled, a dove of snow-white plumage descended from the skies,

rested for a moment above the Holy Grail, and vanished.

Through the sacred hush of the Temple of the Holy Grail sounded and resounded the tones of Elsa's bell — appealing, pitiful, imperative. King Parsifal entered the shrine of the Grail. It burned and throbbed with rose-red light. Around its rim, ran wonderful words which seemed written in living fire. "Send Lohengrin" — the message read — "out into the world. He must defend a helpless girl. She must trust him. She must never seek to know his name."

The Knights of the Holy Grail were always ready to go out on such errands. Lohengrin put on his armor. He said his farewells. He stood outside the Temple waiting for the coming of his steed.

Suddenly, faint, far-off, sweet as breath of spring flowers, there came to him a tender melody. Nearer, clearer, it came, rising, falling on the wind. Turning toward the Rhine,

Lohengrin saw floating majestically toward him a beautiful swan. Guided skillfully by it, was a slender skiff. Bird and boat stopped close to the shore. Lohengrin sprang into the skiff. The swan spread its glistening wings. Away, away, away, to the mystic music, floated bird and boat and Lohengrin — the Knight of the Holy Grail.

In Cleves the day of the contest dawned, rosy, warm, and sweet with perfume. Behind the bars of her cell, Elsa wept and prayed. "Send thou the deliverer, O God," she whispered. Suddenly far-off, faint, mingling with the soft murmur of the river, she heard a song — or the echo of a song. With eager eyes, she looked out. Coming toward her, was a snow-white swan — a snow-white skiff. And in the skiff, asleep, his face turned toward her, was the knight of her dream. Gently the boat floated past her window. The knight stirred — awoke. His eyes fell upon the beautiful face and the sad blue eyes behind the prison



"THE KNIGHT SPRANG TO HIS FEET."

bars. He sprang to his feet. "Weep no more, Elsa," he cried, "I — the Swan Knight — will defend you even with my life."

The boat floated from view. The door of her cell opened. Frederick of Telramund entered. He had come to lead her to the contest.

It was noon — blue, breathless, beautiful noon. Under a tree, splendid in purple robes, sat the king. The knights and ladies of his court were grouped about him. The trumpeters were in their places. Before the throne stood the herald.

In the midst of the crowd stood Elsa, Duchess of Brabant. White as a lily trembling on its stalk, she waited. Her hands were clasped in prayer. Her blue eyes turned ever toward the Rhine.

"Let him stand forth who will defend Elsa of Brabant," sounded the herald's voice. There was silence. The crowd waited. A little bird sang. The Rhine rippled and danced on its

way. "Send thou my deliverer, O God of the fatherless," whispered Elsa.

Once more, clear and sharp on the silence, rang the voice of the herald. "Stand forth, stand forth, the champion of Elsa, Duchess of Brabant," he cried.

Silence! Elsa fell to her knees. Her golden hair streamed like sunshine about her white dress. The little bird sang on. The Rhine laughed and leaped — hark!

Mingling low and clear with its music, came a wondrous melody. It was as if flower-scent or star-shine had been made into music. Rising — falling — rising again, nearer, nearer — nearer it came. Then around the bend of the river swept a stately swan with snow-white plumage. To the entrancing sweetness of its own song, it came close to the shore. Behind it floated a boat — so frail, so fair, it might have been carved from the heart of a great pearl. In the boat stood a knight. Quickly he sprang ashore. In low tones he spoke to

the swan. The bird bent its proud head and sailed away. Dreamily its music drifted back to the listening people.

Dazzling in his armor of pure gold, the knight stood in the sunshine. On his helmet was engraved a swan — its wings outspread. His shield was curiously carved. A golden horn hung from his belt. A jewelled sword was in his hand. From one shoulder hung a cloak blue as May skies.

His face was true and strong and noble. His voice, clear and commanding, broke across the quiet.

“I — the Swan Knight — am come to do battle before God for Elsa, Duchess of Brabant. I will win her cause or die.”

Glad cries and shouts rang out.

The combat was sharp. The Swan Knight was victorious.

In the sunlight, Elsa waited. The Swan Knight turned and saw her standing there. He dropped his sword. He knelt at her feet.

“You are my deliverer,” she said in a low voice. “Rise, Sir Knight, name your prize. It shall be yours.”

The Swan Knight, looking into her deep blue eyes, loved Elsa, Duchess of Brabant. “Give me yourself,” he said.

Elsa’s soft cheeks flushed. Her eyes shone. How true and brave was the knight there at her feet.

“You have saved my life,” she said quietly; “I am yours.”

“Do you trust me, Elsa?” asked the Swan Knight.

“Indeed I trust you, Sir Knight,” said Elsa wondering.

“Sorely must your trust be tried,” said the Swan Knight. “I can tell you neither my name, my rank, nor my race. Ask me none of these things and all will be well. But should you question, Elsa, in that very hour, I must leave you — forever.”

“I will never question, Sir Knight,” said Elsa.

So Elsa, Duchess of Brabant, wedded the Swan Knight. Great was the feasting and rejoicing. Right merrily rang the bells throughout all Cleves.

Years went swiftly by. Elsa grew fairer and more beloved. The Swan Knight ruled well and wisely.

At last, however, his subjects began to ask among themselves, "Who is he — the Swan Knight? From whence came he here? How do we know that he is not a wicked person who will some day do us evil?"

So they came — the curious, doubting people — to Elsa. "You do not even know your husband's name," they said. "Surely it is your right to ask that."

Elsa listened. She tried to put the questions from her. But day and night they troubled her. Who was her husband? Whence had he come? Sometime would he not long for his own home, his own people? Would he not leave her?

One day they sat together — the Swan Knight and Elsa — in a bower near the river. Suddenly Elsa turned toward her husband. With a quick breath she asked, “What is your name, O my husband?”

“Elsa,” cried the Swan Knight, “remember your promise!”

“Whence did you come?” questioned Elsa. There was terror in her eyes. But she could no longer keep back the fatal questions. “Of what people are you?”

“O Elsa, Elsa,” cried the Swan Knight sadly. “Is your great faith dead? Can you no longer trust me? Alas, alas, I love you, Elsa! But this very hour I must leave you. Listen!”

Faint and far off came the sound of music. It was the swan song. Elsa threw herself into her husband’s arms. “Forgive me, O forgive me!” she sobbed. “Leave me not. I care not who nor what you are. Only leave me not.”

“It is too late, Elsa,” cried the Swan Knight. “The swan draws near. I must go.”

In the great banquet hall near by, were assembled the knights of Cleves. Into their midst, the Swan Knight gently led Elsa, white and weeping.

“Listen, O people of Cleves,” he said. “The time has come when I must leave you. But before I go, it is but right that you should know who I am. I am Lohengrin — the son of Parsifal — the Knight of the Holy Grail. At the command of the Holy Grail, I came. At the command of the Holy Grail, I leave.”

Across the stillness, floated the sad, sweet strains of the swan song. Gently the Swan Knight tore himself from Elsa’s clinging arms. “Be brave, Elsa,” he whispered, “some time, somewhere, we shall meet again.”

Lohengrin stepped into the boat. There he stood — his head bared, his eyes fixed on the slender, gold-haired girl on the shore. The swan spread its snow-white wings. Away, away, away, on the sparkling water they glided. Fainter, fainter, fainter, grew the wondrous

music. The boat neared the distant bend in the river. Those who watched saw a dove of wondrous whiteness descend from the skies. It hovered for a moment above the head of the Swan Knight. Then it vanished. And thus went from Cleves forever, Lohengrin — the Knight of the Holy Grail.

THE ANGEL PAGE

Long ago, it is said, there lived in Eberfeld on the Rhine a brave young knight of noble birth and bearing.

To him, one day, came a boy, golden-haired, blue-eyed, with winning face and manner. The knight at once engaged him to become his page.

The little page grew daily more and more beloved by his master. He seemed to have some strange power of reading thoughts. Often the knight found his wishes fulfilled before he had made them known.

One day master and page rode together on the bank of the Rhine. Coming toward them they saw a band of men. Long had they sought to take the knight's life. Their faces were stern and cruel. They were well armed. Their number was large.

With pale face the knight reined in his steed. He could not hope to cut his way through the ranks of the enemy. To turn about was vain.

"Get behind me, my boy," he cried, as he drew his sword. "At least we will die as brave men should. If you see but the smallest chance, flee for your life."

But even while the knight spoke, the little page had turned. "Follow me," he cried. Straight down the bank he spurred his horse. There was a plunge, and horse and rider were in the rushing Rhine.

Swiftly the knight bounded forward. Perhaps, even yet, he could save the lad. "Return," my boy," he cried. "It is better to die fighting than to drown. Return! Return!"

"Fear not!" Above the roar of the hungry waves rang the boy's voice, clear and commanding. "Follow me." Some strange power seized the knight. He urged his horse into the water. It found footing. Step by step, slowly, surely, safely, through the great river

Rhine, went the page and his wondering master.

On came the foe. They wheeled sharply. They rushed down the bank. They dashed into the water. Helplessly they plunged about. No trace of the ford could they find. They were obliged to return to the shore. Safe on the opposite bank, the knight praised the bravery and devotion of his little page. The boy only smiled — a smile of strange sweetness.

Soon after, the beautiful girl wife of the knight was taken ill. Physicians shook their heads. There was but one known remedy. That could not be found in the Rhine country. It was a glass of the fresh milk of a lioness.

Quickly the page left the castle. In an hour he returned. He hastened at once to the knight.

“Master,” he whispered, “here is the milk. Give it her, I pray thee. It is not yet too late.”

He held out to the knight a cup of lioness' milk. It was still warm. At once the knight gave it to the dying girl. The color came flushing back into her pale cheeks. Her eyes opened with a smile. Then she fell into a deep sleep. "She will live," said the physicians.

The knight caught the little page in his arms. "All my vast wealth," he said, "all my great love could not find this simple cure for my wife. Tell me, O little page, how could *you* find it?"

"Noble master," said the boy, "I knew that in a den in Arabia lay a lioness" —

"Arabia?" exclaimed the knight. "And in one short hour did you go to and from Arabia?"

"Even so, master," said the boy quietly.

"Who are you, boy?" asked the knight in wonder. "From whence came you to me?"

"O, master, ask me not," pleaded the page. "Remember how long and faithfully I have served you. I will still be your page. But ask me not my name" —

“Cease your pleading, boy,” said the knight, “and tell me all.”

Gently, gravely the boy answered: “I am an angel,” he said. “From the realm of light, I came to serve you. Now, O my beloved master, I must leave you.”

“Dear little angel page,” pleaded the knight. “Stay with me still. Ask what you will. It is yours. Only leave me not.”

“Alas!” whispered the boy. “I may not stay. You have asked my name. You have offered me a reward. Angels can serve mortals only so long as they are unknown and unrewarded.”

In vain the knight wept and pleaded. “The charm is broken,” the boy said. “But still through me you may become a help and comfort to others. For my sake and in my memory place in the depths of the forest a bell of silver. It will ring softly, and weary ones and lost will hear its tender tone and find their way home.”



“PLACE IN THE FOREST A BELL OF SILVER”

The next instant the page was gone. And never more in castle, or garden, or forest has he been seen. But to this day, peasants, hurrying through the forest at twilight, listen for the faint far echo of the silver bell.



"LIGHTLY THEY TRIP UP THE SHORE"

THE WATER SPRITES

Dropped down among the rocky, wooded slopes of the Rhine, lies a sheet of water called the Mummelsee. In shape it is almost round. Its waters are deep and dark. No fish live in its quiet depths.

Many are the weird tales told about this lonely lake. Here, it is said, lives the water god Mummel and all his fair daughters, the Mummelchen.

When the great moon looks down from the sky, when all the woods are dark and still, out from their home in the lake rise these beautiful nymphs. Lightly they trip up the shore. Their robes are white as sea-foam. Pearls gleam in their golden hair. And all night long, to a sweet weird melody which they only know, they dance to the light of the moon.

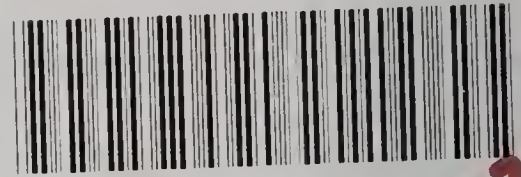
Meanwhile Father Mummel watches the sky. When the stars pale and the little rose-colored rays of light steal down to the dark water, he rises from the lake bed. Sternly he beckons and calls. "Return quickly," he commands. "Return to your home in the lake."

Flitting whitely to the edge of the lake come the golden-haired nymphs. They plunge in. And —

The next instant the lake is full of water lilies opening in the morning sunshine. By some strange magic, each lovely laughing nymph has become a blossom. Her shiny robes are snowy petals. Her pearls are great drops of water.

So, all day long, a lovely water lily, each little daughter of Mummel, rocks drowsily, dreamily, on the water's soft breast.

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